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PARIS FOR D'ELIA, PRETORIA FOR TRENKLE, AF/W FOR GALINDO

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TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM KDEM TO  
SUBJECT: SRSG OULD-ABDALLAH VISITS TOGO

REF: LOME 529

Classified By: Charge J.A. Diffily for reasons b. and d.

¶1. (U) Charge met May 26 with Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah along with French Ambassador Alain Hohleville, German Ambassador Klaus-Guenther Grohmann, EU Delegation Charge Gilles Desesquelles and UNDP Resident Representative Rosine Sori-Coulibaly to discuss the political situation in Togo. Ould-Abdallah is the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for West Africa, resident in Dakar. He explained he was in Togo to talk to the players in the national dialogue to help push them toward a consensus. The Charge and group told Ould-Abdallah of slow progress with the dialogue. The current major sticking point is the composition of the National Electoral Commission and the framework for legislative elections (reftel). When the conversation turned to ways to facilitate progress in the talks, Ould-Abdallah recalled that in November-December 2005, all suggestions made by the UN for a mediator were rejected and it was his personal opinion that having a facilitator would not work.

¶2. (C) Hohleville noted that the major opposition party, the Union of Forces for Change (UFC) has remained in the talks despite their initial demand that there be a facilitator. Hohleville feels that all the parties want a compromise. Desesquelles, the optimist, feels the dialogue will come to an accord with a revised electoral arrangement. He also opined that the UFC has been realistic in their demands and all the opposition parties recognize that the problem of reform of the army is an ethnic problem and will require a long term solution.

¶3. (C) When Ould-Abdallah asked about Togo's relations with China, Iran and Libya, Hohleville noted that the GoT has to cover its expenses and was having to try for second tier assistance. Desesquelles agreed that the suspension of assistance from the EU since 1995 has caused problems for Togo. EU Commissioner Louis Michel on a recent visit to Togo (reftel) agreed to free up Euro 20 million for judicial reform, human rights issues, and income-generating activities for youth upon a satisfactory conclusion to the national dialogue. Ould-Abdallah noted the dilemma - a less-than-democratic regime needs money for development but the dispersal of European Development Fund money is conditioned on progress toward representative government and rule of law.

¶4. (C) Comment: Ould-Abdallah did not seem to be fully briefed on the Togo situation. His passing comment that Togo's was a quote old unquote crisis conveyed the impression that he was not energetic nor hopeful about a resolution to it. In a conversation with the Charge on May 29, Ambassador

Grohmann, who had again talked to Ould-Abdallah on May 27, also noted his negativity. Ould-Abdallah met with President Faure after our meeting, also to discuss the national dialogue. Newspapers reporting on his visit say that he noted considerable distrust among the negotiating parties and that the ruling party, the Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais (RPT) had taken a very hard line throughout the dialogue.

Ould-Abdallah was reported to have said that intervention by a mediator was necessary to move the talks ahead. Post hopes Ould-Abdallah will help generate support for an outside mediator when he reports back to New York. End Comment.

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